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PRESS RELEASE

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Calling on Young Nigerian Leaders: Announcing the 2016 Mandela Washington Fellowship

Abuja, Nigeria – The U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Nigeria is pleased to announce that applications for the 2016 Mandela Washington Fellowship will begin to be accepted tomorrow, Thursday, October 1, 2015. The Mandela Washington Fellowship is the flagship program of President Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative, and a key part of the U.S. commitment to invest in the future of Africa.

Beginning in 2016, the fellowship will bring together 1,000 young African leaders across three tracks—business and entrepreneurship, civic leadership, and public management—for a six-week, in-depth academic and leadership training at 20 top American universities. Afterwards, the fellows will converge in Washington, D.C., for a Presidential summit, featuring a town hall with President Obama.

Eligible candidates should be between the ages of 25 and 35 and have a demonstrated track record of leadership in a public, private, or civic organization, and a commitment to contributing their skills and talents to build and serve their communities.

Interested candidates should visit <http://www.yali.state.gov> to apply and seek further information. The application deadline is **November 11, 2015**. Prospective fellows needing access to the Internet may visit the Information Resource Center at the U.S. Embassy in Abuja or U.S. Consulate General in Lagos or one of the 11 American Corners in Nigeria to complete the application.

About the Mandela Washington Fellowship

Nearly one in three Africans are between the ages of 10 and 24, and around 60 percent of Africa's total population is below the age of 35. The Mandela Washington Fellowship initiative is part of the President's overall effort to encourage investment in the education and training of the continent's next generation of leaders.

In 2010, President Obama launched YALI as a vehicle to support an emerging generation of African leaders. In 2014, the program was expanded to include 500 young African leaders from sub-Saharan Africa. In 2016, 1,000 young Africans will participate in the fellowship.

Since its inception, 86 young Nigerians have participated in the fellowship, and over 26,000 young professionals in Nigeria have joined the YALI network. In 2016, approximately 100 young Nigerians are expected to participate in the fellowship. Grace Jerry, a Nigerian fellow and an advocate for people living with disabilities, introduced President Obama at the 2015 presidential summit. Please watch the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1vln7-t9Mg>.

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Relevant information about U.S. policies and programs in Nigeria can be found on our websites:
<http://nigeria.usembassy.gov> and www.usaid.gov/ng

